

# STERLING LEGAL SEARCH VIDEO INTERVIEW TIPS



**INTRODUCTION.** Video conferencing or interviewing is not a new trend – resisting it won't make it go away. We know that when things have been a certain way for a certain amount of time, we gain consistency and feel comfortable. We typically don't like change or to be outside of our comfort zone. We build our lives around this consistency and inevitably complacency becomes the norm. But today, the pace of change is moving faster than ever before, and we cannot afford to be comfortable or be afraid to accept and embrace change.

Video interviewing and conferencing (whether live or pre-recorded) has actually been around for a long time, but the current COVID-19 situation has certainly changed the pace of change and the very way we live and work. We are seeing on-demand interviews being fully embraced by our clients and candidates alike. This will change the face of how interviewing and hiring is done for the foreseeable future.

There is no doubt that you will be asked to participate in video interviews in today's job market. Video interviewing has some unique challenges and requires extra preparation to execute successfully. We've put together some important tips that will help you ace your video interviews. Embrace the change and we'll see you on video!

# VIDEO INTERVIEW TIPS

**SET YOURSELF UP.** Test all the technologies: Camera, sound, connection, light, and video programs – make sure that everything works.

Typically, the firm you are applying to will specify the video conferencing platform to be used for the interview. It's a good idea to test this video conferencing software before the call, especially if you've never used it before. Also, give yourself a few extra minutes before the call to set up and if possible, log onto the call a little early. You will likely need to download a plugin – install and test it before the interview.

Test your microphone before your video call. You want to make sure you are able to communicate clearly – make sure your audio clarity and volume are good. You should speak at your normal volume — there's no need to shout. It's best to speak in a conversational tone as if you are at the actual interview.

Since this is a video screening, you have the advantage of picking the best space for the interview. Stage your space. Choose a private uncluttered space. Choose a quiet location. Cut out distractions. Choose a space with good lighting and a generic background, ideally a plain wall. Minimize background clutter. Consider using headphones to minimize background noise. If you have roommates, partners, or family members who are home, let them know beforehand that you'll be in on a video call to minimize interruptions.

If you do need to share your screen during a video call, take a few seconds to prepare before you hit that share button. Clear any extra tabs or programs you may have open and make sure private or sensitive information is hidden.

**YOU HAD ME AT HELLO.** Rehearse your performance. This is your chance to make a good first impression – it usually happens within the first 7 seconds. Rehearsal is important. You are more exposed on video than in an in-person interview. Fortunately, working with video gives you the ability to check your performance in advance. We strongly recommend using your phone or computer to record yourself answering typical interview questions – several times. Doing so will help you evaluate the content of your answers as well as how you are coming across.

*Watch yourself for verbal tics such as repeatedly saying "umm" and distracting movements such as too much gesturing. Watch for negative effects of hesitations and unclear answers. These will be magnified and could potentially be viewed repeatedly if the video interview is recorded. We know video interviewing can be unnerving. Push through the discomfort and keep rehearsing – it will pay off in the end.*

Prepare possible questions you might have for the interviewer in advance, as well as some notes with points you might want to highlight during the interview. Don't read your notes and keep the notes off camera if possible.

Show confidence. Smile. Use the opportunity to maximize your body language, express your enthusiasm and passion for past projects and future possibilities. This is your chance to impress. Loosen up (but keep hand movement to a minimum). You want to appear normal. Speak clearly and watch how fast you speak (and don't forget to unmute yourself!).

**THE EYES HAVE IT.** To truly hit it out of the park, you want to make a real connection. Look into the camera. Stay focused. Be attentive and engaged during the call. Your goal is to achieve a natural, conversational eye contact. Good eye contact builds trust and rapport in any conversation.

It can be tricky to gauge the right amount of eye contact during a video interview. Set up your device or camera so that it has a clear, unobstructed view of you. While it's tempting to look at the computer screen images, you should actually look at the camera, so it appears as if you're speaking directly to the interviewer. This will help you appear to be 100 percent engaged and present. Keep your focus on the camera, rather than the inset image of yourself.

It's important to remember that video conferences are essentially in-person interactions. If you can position the video conference window containing the interviewer's image immediately underneath the webcam and focus your attention on the interviewer, this should do the trick.

**DRESS THE PART.** One of the best parts about working from home is getting to wear t-shirts, sweatpants and slippers all day, but that is not appropriate for a video call. Dress how you would for an in-person meeting.

It's best to avoid busy patterns, plaids or stripes which may be distracting on camera. While the camera angle should show you from the waist up (your face is the real focal point), if there is any possibility you will need to stand up, make sure your pants or skirt is also professional.

**WRAP IT UP.** End your video interview on a positive, professional note. Don't let your guard down. The camera is still rolling until you, or the interviewer stops the video conference. You need to appear self-confident and on your game until the meeting has ended.

Write a thank-you note (e-thank you is fine). If there were several people who interviewed you, send individual emails or notes to each of them. Try to vary your letters a bit in case they decide to compare them.

A video interview is your first important step toward your dream job. It's essential that you view on-demand interviews as you would an in-person interview. The video interview is important in helping you create an initial impression; but don't consider it as the one and only round. For round two, have your resume and portfolio ready and look forward to the next step, which we hope is an in-person interview.

**CONCLUSION.** The world is changing so quickly that it's hard to keep up. Perhaps things seem more complicated now, or just plain scary and unfair. But sound planning, analyses of trends and thorough research help shape new directions. Business will return to normal, but one thing that won't change is the unprecedented use of video conferencing technologies. Everyone must build digital readiness into their DNA, personal and business.

Knowledge and a little preparation will help ensure that your video interviewers are focused on what is most important – the content of your answers and your great qualities as a candidate. At Sterling Legal, our goal is to help you make the best possible impression in a job interview – whether in person or virtual.

We look forward to seeing you on video. Change never looked so good.